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Major creek cleanup to be proposed today

By CAROL NEMO
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In a major attack on stormwater flooding, an unprecedented major cleanup of two areas in the Gravois Creek and Maline Creek watersheds is expected to be approved Wednesday by Metro Council. St. Louis Sewer District trustees.

The work, to include the reshaping of stormwater creeks in both watersheds, should begin next week, said John J. Patsulich, MSD engineer and special-project adviser.

The Gravois project will cost \$150,000, and the Maline Creek work is to cost \$120,000.

COSTS WILL BE PAID from taxes imposed last year by the MSD board, when it set a rate of 1 cent per \$100 assessed valuation for the sole purpose of cleaning creeks. The tax generates approximately \$800,000 yearly, Patsulich said.

"The cleanup on such a grand scale will be unprecedented for this area," he said.

Under Phase I of the broad-scale plan, 2.9 miles of the main Gravois Creek channel, upstream from the confluence of Gravois Creek and River Des Peres, will be cleared of all debris. Gravois Creek empties into River Des Peres, which empties into the Mississippi River.

The Gravois project will extend west of Celtic Court, between Interstate 55 and Lemay Ferry Road in South St. Louis County.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, with the Gravois project, Maline Creek will be cleared 1.5 miles upstream — from Riverway Boulevard to Kallie Ferry Road, between Chambers Road and Chain of Rocks Drive in the county. Maline Creek empties into the Mississippi River.

"While the main channels are being cleared, Patsulich said, tributaries leading into them will be cleaned out by the public works departments of Berkeley, Ladue, Crestwood and unincorporated St. Louis County.

"College students and youngsters employed as temporary summer help have been helping with the cleanup of the tributaries since June 15," he said. The young people will continue the creek-cleanup campaign through Aug. 15.

While municipalities provide personnel and supervision for cleanup of the tributaries, MSD will supply its expertise, dumpsters and labor, it was explained.

TONS OF TRASH and debris, including car bodies and fenders, discarded refrigerators and water heaters, bicycles, grocery bags and lawn mowers, will be piled up and removed. Privately owned trees and shrubs that have collected the nearest channel constricts, causing backup and flooding.

Trees that stand in the creek will be cut at their bases, but the rock structures will not be disturbed. The trees will be banded every 10 feet with all weeds and brush that have collected for years in the creeks.

"We will be discretionary about trees that will be cut down," Patsulich said. "Gravel bars will be removed to open up the main channels for better flow of water."

WORK WILL NOT be performed beyond the tops of any creek banks, unless ordered by an MSD director. This is to avoid any disturbance of private property bordering the creeks, Patsulich said.

When Phase I is completed, the cleanup work will continue for an additional 4 miles upstream from both Gravois and Maline watersheds, it was explained.

Then, plans are to make creek improvements upstream from the River Crest watershed and into the St. Louis County and into the Coldwater Creek Watershed, which flows through the North County municipalities of Madisonian Heights, Madeline Acres and Jannetta.

Eventually, as money becomes available, cleanup work will be extended to other major watersheds in the district, the project engineer said.



Clogged tributaries leading to main channels in the Gravois and Maline Creek watersheds are being cleaned out by Comprehensive Employment and Training Act workers and the public works departments of Berkeley, Ladue, Crestwood and unincorporated St. Louis County.

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Globe-Democrat Photo by Bob Diaz

Creek cleanup: Crews clear away heavy brush as a \$188,000 project for cleanup of the Maline Creek watershed gets under way near the bridge on Riverview Boulevard in

North St. Louis County. The Metropolitan Sewer District also has ordered a similar \$165,000 cleanup of the Gravois Creek watershed in South County.